

# REASONS

Humbly offered to the

Consideration of the Honour-  
able the HOUSE of COMMONS,  
against prohibiting the Importation  
of Wine in Bottles, &c.



## REASONS

Humbly Offered to the

Great Britain. Commons, House of  
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Consideration of the Honourable  
the HOUSE OF COMMONS, against Part  
of a BILL now depending, intituled,  
*A BILL for Repealing the present Duties  
payable upon Wine Lees imported, and laying  
new Duties thereon, and for other Purposes  
therein mentioned, whereby the Importation of  
Wine in Bottles is proposed to be prevented.*

I. **A**LL French Wines, especially *Burgundy, Champagne, Coterotee, and Hermitage*, are so difficult to be dressed, purged, and then preserved in their full Taste, Flavour, and Fineness, unless bottled off at the critical Time, that they often elude the Skill of the greatest Artists, of which many are daily convinced by costly Experience.

II. It is evident, That *French Wines* can be more easily dressed and refined in *France* than in *England*, the Materials for doing it being in greater Plenty there than here, and cheaper by the Amount of Freight and Duty: And there is in *France* no Danger of adulterating them with *Spanish or Portugal Wines*; such being entirely prohibited there.

III. These Considerations, founded on long Experience, have induced several *British Subjects* to keep Cellars, Vaults, and Magazines, at *Rouen* for *Burgundies, Champagnes, Coterotees, and Hermitage*; at *Boulogn* and *Calais* for *Clarets* and all other *French Wines*, where they can have Coopers of the Country, well skilled in the several Sorts and Growths of these Wines, to manage them, and, as Occasion requires, to bottle them off; and from whence they import them over into *England*, when fit for drinking: By which Method there can be no Danger of Adulteration by Wines of other Countries.

IV. It



IV. It is humbly presumed, that of late Years *French Wines* have been drank in the greatest Perfection in *England*, except what has been privately imported at some Times from *Holland* or *Flanders*, or where Contracts have lately been made with particular Wine Merchants at Home, some of which have not in all Respects so well succeeded: And this Perfection is evidently owing to the Establishment of the Magazines at the Places before mentioned, from whence the Nobility and Gentry, as well as Wine Merchants, could from time to time be furnish'd with what Sorts, in what Quantities, and at what Prices they pleased to commission their Wines, when fit for Drinking.

V. By these Means the Wine Merchants at Home had it not in their Power to impose on their Customers either in Taste or Price, the Generality being themselves Judges of both, as well as the Merchants.

VI. If that Part of the Bill now depending, which regards the preventing the Importation of Wine in Bottles, should pass into a Law, it will ruin the concerned in those Magazines, confining the Trade to a few Merchants, who will quickly make a Monopoly thereof: And it is not easy to imagine a Reason why the Nobility and Gentry of this Countrey should subject themselves to such a Monopoly, which must certainly raise the Price of their Wines, already high enough, and bring them in Danger, nay almost under a Necessity of drinking Wines that are adulterated, or of entertaining a Wine-Cooper in their House as well as a Butler.

VII. Nor would this abate the Consumption so as to give us any Advantage in Trade against *France*; for Wine, like some other Commodities, is only comparatively good; and when the true Taste is once lost, if one get the best the Place affords, (which will be at the Discretion of those Monopolizers) it will be confess'd good Wine, tho' nothing like the Wines now imported; and long Experience has taught that the advance of Price rather increases than diminishes the Demand: The late Increase of the Demand of *Oporto* Wines may serve for a present Instance.

VIII. If the aforementioned Part of the Bill should pass into a Law, prime old Claret could not be obtained here but at most extravagant Prices; for after ruining the Magazines before-mentioned, *Bordeaux* would be the only Port from whence Clarets would be imported, which is too far distant to trust the Risque of the Seas, old Wine being irretrievably lost if it should fail by the way: And it may be presumed that the Merchants would not keep it here on their Hands till old and mellow, after paying the high Prices abroad, and the high Duties at home, unless upon very extravagant Profit: Nor could the Nobility and Gentry risque the keeping it by them, unless they could confide in such a Wine-Cooper on Occasion, as a monopolizing Wine-Merchant should recommend to them; so that the generality of the Clarets imported would be the smallest Wines, which are commonly drank within the Year; and yet these might be screwed up to the highest Prices, by a Monopoly.

IX. It is evident, that a Law prohibiting the Importation of *French* Wine in Bottles, will encourage the running it in Bottles, to the Detriment of his Majesty's Revenue, and the fair Trader; for a Commodity, the Entry of which is prohibited, and the Use not prohibited, will



will of course be attempted to be run. And this, one may venture to say, will most undoubtedly happen in *Burgundies*, *Champagnes*, *Cote-rotees* and *Hermitages*, which cannot be had good any other way than in Bottles.

X. It is humbly apprehended, that without a general Prohibition as aforesaid, if the Importer was restricted, not to import in Bottles less than ten Dozen in each Hamper, (as being of equal Bulk with a Hog-shead) all Fraud from the unfair Dealers would be sufficiently guarded against.

XI. As to the Detriment occasioned to the Glass Manufacture, by the Importation of Wine in Bottles; it cannot amount to a great Sum; for in the first Place, the Metal is preserved, and the Loss is only the Difference between the Price of Bottles and Casks: And it is reported strongly, that the *French* have Granted, or are to Grant a Licence for the Importation of Foreign Bottles, because of the great Consumption of Wood occasion'd by their Glass Manufactures: Or if this is not true, it might perhaps be easy to obtain Licence to Import as many *English* Bottles, as there are *French* Bottles Exported: Or let the Clause run against Importation of *French* Wine in any Bottles, except such as are Manufactured in *England*; in which Case there might be Bottles of due Measure seal'd and markt in *England*, to prevent Frauds and Trouble in the Measurement at the Custom-House.

XII. There would be no great Danger of counterfeiting such Bottles, because they are dearer in *France* than in *England*, by more than the Difference of the Freight.

XIII. The Importer at present pays a Duty on Wine in Bottles more than on Wine in Cask, very near equal to the Price of Bottles in *England*; therefore he would not probably be at the charge of buying Bottles dear in *France*, and paying this further Duty in *England*, if he did not judge it necessary at some Times for the Benefit of the Wine.

It is therefore humbly hoped, that the Parliament will never pass a Law, which, it is apprehended, can serve no other Purpose, but to secure a Monopoly of this Trade to a few Wine Merchants, and raise the Price of Wines upon the Nobility and Gentry, to bring them under the Danger of Drinking Wines that are Adulterated, and ruin several Traders, who have provided Magazines of *French* Wines to supply the Nobility and Gentry of this Countrey; and who have already bottled off the *Burgundies* and *Champagnes* of the Year 1727, for that Purpose.